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(54) **Safety system for a closed compartment of a vehicle**

(57) A safety sensing and/or release assembly (10) for a trunk or compartment of a vehicle is provided which is positionable within the trunk or compartment space of the vehicle so as to allow for opening of the trunk or compartment lid (16) in response to an occupant detection or a manual actuation of the system from within the trunk or compartment (18). The safety assembly comprises a handle (12) for activating a release mechanism (14) of the lid (16) in order to open the compartment (18), a release assist device (84), at least one illumination source (46), which is at least occasionally activated to provide illumination of the handle (12), and a control (48) for activating the assist device (84) or the illumination source (46) in response to an occurrence of at least one activating event such as when the deck lid is closed, motion is sensed by a sensor (66,68) within the trunk/compartment, an object having a predetermined temperature is detected within the trunk/compartment, or the like. The assist device (84) is operable to activate the handle (12) or the release mechanism (14) to ease the opening of

the trunk or to automatically open the trunk in response to the control, and may be electrically powered, mechanically powered or gas powered. The control is operable to activate the illumination source (46) for a period of time following occurrence of at least one activating event, and subsequently to deactivate the illumination source upon completion of that time period. The handle (12) of the present invention is designed for easy visibility in minimal lighting conditions and easy recognition even by a young child who may become trapped within the trunk space of the vehicle. This allows easy recognition and activation of the handle (12) and release mechanism (14) of the lid of the vehicle compartment in order to escape from within a trunk space. The system may be operable to sense ambient conditions in the vehicle compartment, and generates a control signal in response to the sensed conditions. This control signal actuates indicators to notify operators of the vehicle that there is a person trapped in the trunk. The control signal is also used to actuate a lamp inside the trunk to provide

light for the trapped person. A trunk release is also actuated, by a control module, to free the trapped person. The trunk release of the automobile can be prevented

from being actuated if the automobile is moving, which prevents the trunk lid from unexpectedly opening while the vehicle is in motion.

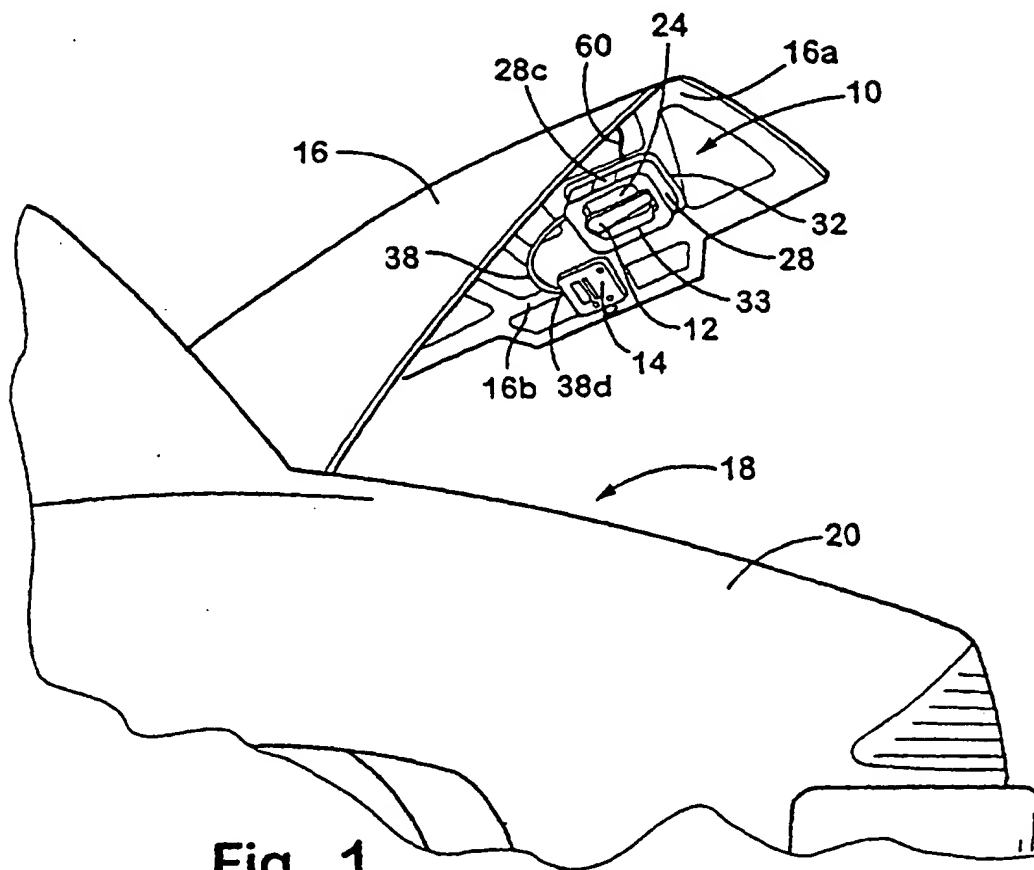


Fig. 1



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## EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number  
EP 00 65 0023

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.7)
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Y	* page 1 - page 5 * * page 7 - page 11 * * page 13, paragraph 3 * * page 17, paragraph 3 * * page 21, paragraph 3 * * page 22, paragraph 5 - page 23, paragraph 1; figures 1-3 *	6-8,10	
X	PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 1999, no. 01, 29 January 1999 (1999-01-29) - & JP 10 278564 A (FUJITSU TEN LTD), 20 October 1998 (1998-10-20)	1-5	
Y	* abstract *	6	
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Y	US 5 554 912 A (MURPHY MORGAN D ET AL) 10 September 1996 (1996-09-10) * column 3, line 53 - column 4, line 10 *	8	
-The present search report has been drawn up for all claims			
Place of search Munich		Date of completion of the search 10 August 2004	Examiner DE ACHA GONZALEZ, J
<p>CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS</p> <p>X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document</p> <p>T : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons &amp; : member of the same patent family, corresponding document</p>			

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European Patent  
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Application Number

EP 00 65 0023

### CLAIMS INCURRING FEES

The present European patent application comprised at the time of filing more than ten claims.

☐ Only part of the claims have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for the first ten claims and for those claims for which claims fees have been paid, namely claim(s):

☐ No claims fees have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for the first ten claims.

### LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION

The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirements of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:

see sheet B

☐ All further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for all claims.

☐ As all searchable claims could be searched without effort justifying an additional fee, the Search Division did not invite payment of any additional fee.

☐ Only part of the further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the inventions in respect of which search fees have been paid, namely claims:

☒ None of the further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the invention first mentioned in the claims, namely claims:

1-10



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LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION  
SHEET B

Application Number  
EP 00 65 0023

The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirements of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:

1. claims: 1-10

Apparatus for controlling the status of a compartment of a vehicle comprising a sensor, a controller and a mechanism.

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2. claims: 11-25

Apparatus situated within a compartment and adapted for use in opening a deck lid of a vehicle comprising a release mechanism adapted for operation from the interior of the compartment.

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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT  
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

EP 00 65 0023

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report.  
The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on  
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10-08-2004

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EPO FORM P0459

For more details about this annex : see Official Journal of the European Patent Office, No. 12/82